Women's League Studies Mental Hospitals

(Editor's note: The following informative article is taken from a release of The League of Women Voters in Virginia. Space did not permit use of the entire release, but the portions published appear to us to be most timely and informative).

OUR MENTAL HOSPITALS

Intensive Treatment vs. Custodial Care

The year 1946 saw the beginning of a wave of reform in the mental hospitals of the nation. Spurred on by books, magazine articles, and movies which exposed the shocking, filthy, brutish conditions then prevailing in most state hospitals, the states, including Virginia, made strong efforts toward improvement of these hitherto concentration-camp like places. Since that time great strides have been made all over the country. Dramatic rescues of those supposed to be hopelessly insane have taken place as in the case of a woman who, in 1946, was confined in the mental hospital in Topeka, Kansas. She had been confined for 14 years. She neither asked for nor got any attention. In 1941 a lunacy board, reviewing a suit for divorce by the woman's husband, had interviewed her and, after hearing her babble of the daily visits she thought were paid her by her son 1500 miles away, declared her "incurably insane." But with the introduction of improved treatment into Kansas' mental hospitals, this woman began to receive visits from a young Dr. James M. Mott, Jr., a Menninger-Clinic-trained man who did not accept the prognosis of incurability. He used no surgery, no wonder drugs on this patient. He did visit her every day; in effect his visits replaced the delusion of her son's visits in this woman's mind. She began to get well. Six months later she accepted a job in the outside world, as companion - housekeeper to an elderly cardiac patient, while still returning to the hospital for checkups. In 1951 she was granted a full hospital discharge, and when her employer at length died, was able to choose between five offers of nursing positions. Similar dramatic rescues from the horrors of the "back wards" were reported from Indiana, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Iowa, Idaho, and other states where the wave of reform was strong.

But that such reprieves from bedlam were the exception rather than the rule in the country at large is proven by the existence of hundreds among the 207 mental hospitals of the nation where no such approach has been taken. We quote from the remarks of Judge Walter E. Hoffman of Norfolk, is dismissing a $100,000 suit brought by the family of a patient at Central State Hospital in Petersburg. The suit for damages was against the United States since the patient lost his mind aboard a government-chartered ship. While dismissing the suit, Judge Hoffman stated that if the government did not transfer the patient, Warner Williams, to an "institution providing adequate care" (instead of Central State) it might "give rise to further litigation." He went on to speak of "the tragic story of facilities for treating mental patients in Virginia. Undoubtedly this Commonwealth is not alone," he said, "in the neglect of those unfortunates traversing the valley of mental darkness. It is rather apparent to this court that the science of medicine has outgrown the vast majority of states, and legislators have been unable to grasp the true situation by keeping abreast of the times." Judge Hoffman noted that the federal government pays $7 a day per patient to state hospitals in Virginia for the care of mental patients on a temporary basis, where "in the instant case, Central State expends $1.94 per day per patient." (The cost per patient per day in Virginia's mental hospitals, since the 1954 General Assembly, is supposed to be 2.50. The cost per prisoner per day in Virginia jails is $2.96.) Judge Hoffman declared that patients at Central State "wait to die" if "shock treatments do not bring forth favorable results. Other than shock treatments occasionally administered there is no treatment afforded to the patients. They eat, sleep, and sit—that is the routine day."

Nevertheless the wave of reform has been a real and a lasting one, as is shown by the record of expenditures for mental hospitals on a national basis. In 1946 all 48 states spent less than -190 million to maintain their state hospitals. Dr. S. Bernard Wortis, testfying before the committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce in Congress, hereafter called the Wolverton Committee, last year gave the figure for cost of patients in public mental hospitals of the nation at $467 million in 1951, $568 million in 1952. But this vast amount of money is not always expended in ways constructive to the recovery of the patients.

For within the wave of reform two distinct philosophies prevailed, leading to two differnt methods of improvement of conditions. Roughly speaking, these philosophies can be described as, ,rst, the old attitude that mental illness is pretty much incurable and that the best thing that can be done for the mentally ill is to keep them shut up safely and as comfortably as possible. This first philosophy makes superficial sense: overcrowding, as shown in a recent survey by the Council of State Governments, plagues most state mental hospitals; nearly half those that the Council surveyed were accomodating from 20% to 50% more patients than they were built to hold. Virginia's state hospitals today hold 2,948 patients in excess of capacity. Thus, reasons the brick-and-mortar philosophy, you can solve the major problem of overcrowding by putting more beds in more and bigger buildings.

The second philosophy is based on the proposition that the mentally ill can be cured. Building, while included in the programs stemming from this philosophy, is relegated to secondary importance. Intensive treatment—psychiatric care and its corrollaries—is the watchword of this school of thought. It aims at solving the overcrowding problem by getting the patients out of the hospitals. Speaking of the fallacy of the brick-and-mortar philosophy as a solution to overcrowding, Dr. Carl Menninger says, "New buildings will promptly fill up again, since there are so few competent staff people available." The adherents of this second school of thought hold that problems which remain once adequate shelter is provided can only be solved by the adoption of intensive treatment. In pursuit of this aim, they raise salaries to attract personnel — more and better physicians and psychiatric aides—to the hospitals already existing. They affiliate with medical schools, and draw in consultants to expand their medical psychiatric resources. They build up existing personnel by intensive in-traing service programs.

In Ohio, the annual cost per bed at Columbus State Hospital which handles 2,414 patients at a time and gives custodial care was $638. The annual cost per bed at Youngtown State Receiving Hospital, which has 80 beds and gives intensive treatment, was $3,247. BUT: the cost per patient at the custodial care hospital was $1,181 annually, while the cost per patient at the intensive treatment hospital was $281. They got the pa... They filled their beds ov... during the year.

In Topeka, Kansas, a ... pital found that its case... ped 15% in less than two... er the introduction of ... treatment.

In Indiana, which has ... been pledged to the ref... state mental hospitals, ... stay of a patient at one ... pitals under the old cu... system was more than tw... which nowadays would c... Through intensive trea... average stay has already ... ened to less than ten yea... the Larue Carter Memo... tal in Indianapolis, the a... tient's stay is only 85 d... costs about $1,275. This ... Carter Hospital is set u... cases promptly, after a... diagnoses, for intensive t... these are cases which, ... would once have wound ... later on the hopeless wa...

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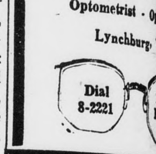

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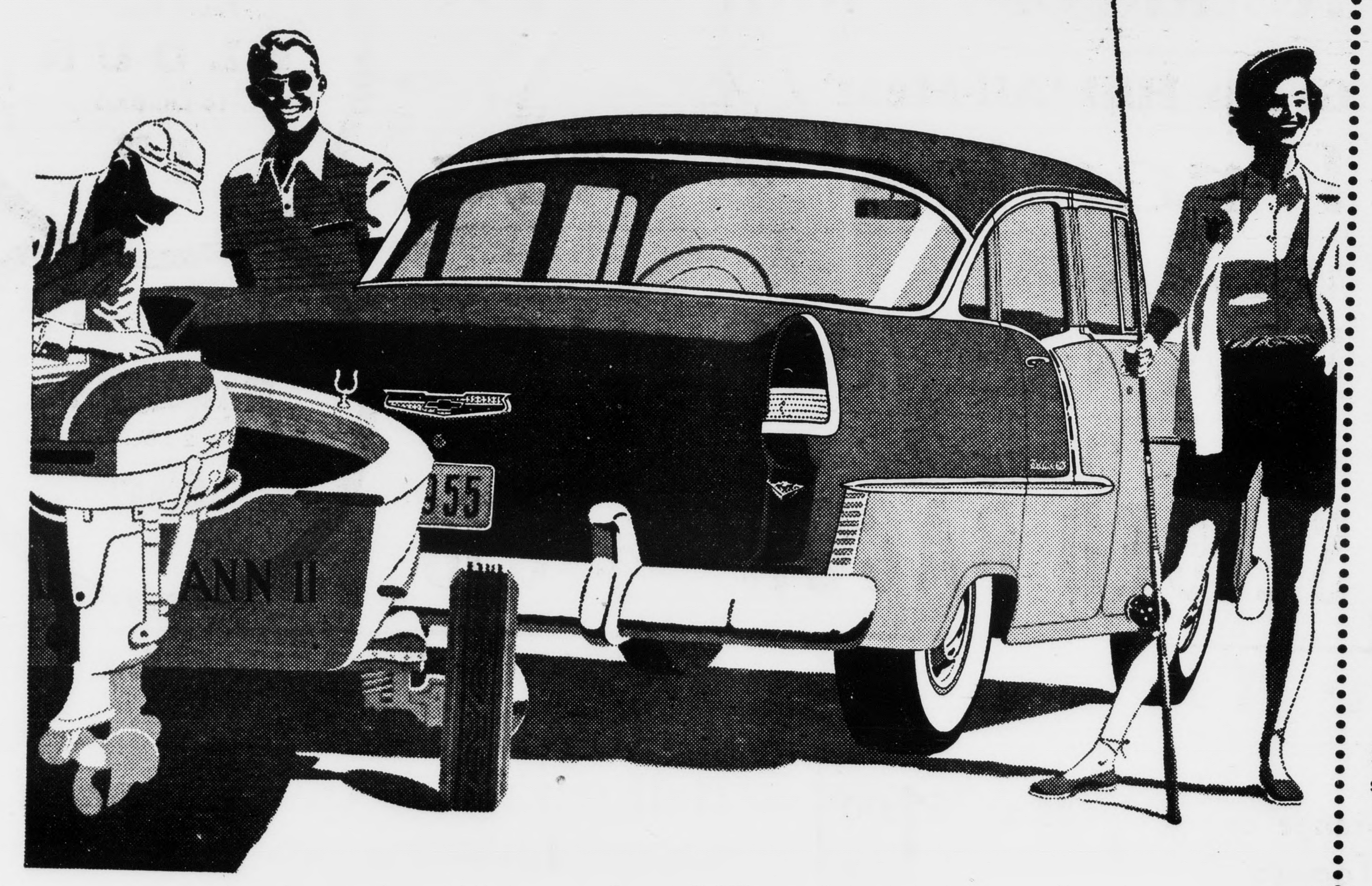

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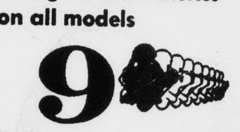

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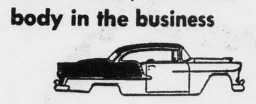

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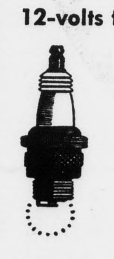

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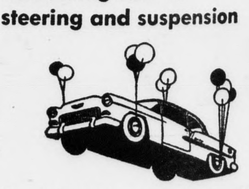

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COMMENT ON SPORTS

By Pete Fritchie

...gton.- Not since Joe Louis ... champion has there been so ... terest in a battle between ... ights as there now is over ... iano-Moore go. The second ... meling fight stirred as ... terest, but possibly none ...

... Moore should have had ... long ago. The boxing ... the old man was good. ... power in both paws and ... not to be denied. But be... chie was a light-heavy, some ... was not the man to fight ... weight champion.

...ese same people are say... same thing will happen to ... hat happened to Bobo Ol... month. Good big man, they ... beat the good little man. ... re a little man, or a small... in this go?

... came in for the Nino ... ght at either 186 or 196. ... ght he made for that fight ... shrouded in mystery. Mar... hts at 189. If Archie came ..., then he would be three ... ghter than the champion. ... uldn't beat him.

... comes in heavier than Mar... certainly wouldn't suffer ... a light-heavy. There is ... ubt over the contention of ... that Archie really weigh... for the Valdes fight in Las ... The official figure was sup... be 186.

... two fighters appear to be pretty evenly matched. They should be within five pounds of each other. But the thing that makes the bout a prospective sensation is the style of the two men. Marciano comes and gets'em. Moore loves a fighter to come after him. He knocks most of them out.

That's how Archie flattened Olson when Bobo started coming in for a little slugging. The Marciano-Moore fight will probably not go the limit. If Moore beats Rocky, he will be the first to do it. That fact alone makes Rocky the favorite to put Archie to sleep. But the old light-heavy champ will be a dangerous opponent, possibly the most dangerous Marciano has faced, since he can box as well as slug.

N & W ORDERS 1,500 COAL-CARRYING CARS

Fifteen hundred new all-steel coal-carrying cars have been ordered by the Norfolk and Western Railway. The cars—1,000 70-ton hoppers and 500 70-ton gondolas— will be built by the American Car and Foundry Division of ACF Industries Inc., in Huntington, W. Va. Deliveries will begin early next year.

The order for these open-top, many-purpose cars in in addition to that for 500 box cars recently ordered from the Pullman Standard Manufacturing Company, deliveries of which will begin in August.

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THE BIBLE SPEAKS

International Uniform Sunday School Lessons

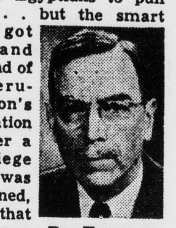
BY DR. KENNETH J. FOREMAN

Background Scripture: 2 Kings 25:10-12; Jeremiah 40—44.
Devotional Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:1-5.

Thy Will Be Done

Lesson for July 31, 1955

THEY were a sorry lot, the people left behind after the last invasion. The puppet-king Zedekiah had asked the Egyptians to pull his strings . . . but the smart Babylonians got wind of it, and that was the end of Zedekiah, Jerusalem, Solomon's Temple, the nation of Judah. After a two years' siege the city fell, was sacked and burned, and anybody that was anybody was either killed or deported. Jeremiah, the city's most famous citizen, was offered a chance to go to Babylonia as a free man; but he declined. He preferred to stay with his own people, he said, and his own land. But they were a sorry lot, the dregs of the populace for the most part.



Dr. Foreman

Vows, Good and Bad

They were glad enough to have Jeremiah with them. They seemed to recognize him at last as a true prophet. He had told them so often just what would happen—and it did. So they began to look up to him and come to him with their problems. One day they came up with a very important decision they wanted him to help them make. Should they go to Egypt or not? This was not as if they were going down there like tourists into Florida. This was for keeps, a full-scale emigration. A sort of Exodus in reverse, with Jeremiah the new Moses to lead them back into Egypt. (Why they wanted to go can be read in detail, in Jeremiah.) They put this up to him: Find out what God wants us to do. You are a prophet and you should know. "Whether it is good or evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord God," they solemnly promised. But they did not mean it. Their minds were made up to go. When Jeremiah after ten days knew that the Lord did not want them to go to Egypt, he told the people so. But they paid no attention; on the contrary they bundled him up and took him along, an unwilling prisoner on their forbidden road. So they broke their good vow. Some time later down in Egypt they bragged to Jeremiah that they were keeping their promises now. They had vowed to make sacrifices to the star-gods and goddesses—and sacrifice they did, to the "Queen of heaven" and a lot more.

If You Knew God's Will . . .

Before condemning those people too quickly, let the reader translate the story into the 20th century. Don't we all pray, "Thy will be done?" Have we not all asked God more than once to show us what to do? When we pray "Thy will be done" we are making an implied promise, that we will cooperate. What we mean is, of course, not "Thy will be done in spite of everything I do to stop it," but "Thy will be done, and let me know if I can help." This raises two questions. One is: How can we know God's will? Can we know God's will without a guaranteed prophet to help us out? Well, we have the Gospels, we have the Word of God. We surely can know a great deal about God's will. We at least know this much, that any scheme, plan or intention which is out of line with the great teachings of the Bible is out of line with God, and doomed to final failure.

Would You Do It?

The other question raised by that prayer-vow, Thy will be done, is this: If you knew the will of God, would you do it? Those ancient men of Judah scorned God's will, and scorned his prophet, although they had been pleading for light and direction. We had better be sure we are without sin before we cast at them the first stone. We often feel that God does not give us enough light. We pray earnestly for his will to be made known to us, and we are inclined to grumble at the silence of God. The trouble is we do not follow the light he has given us. A great American preacher called attention to Saul's request of the Witch of Endor, "Bring me up Samuel." The thing is—he had had Samuel. For a long time Samuel had been telling Saul where he was wrong, but the king had paid no attention. A man who will not listen to Samuel living will not listen to his ghost. So with us. "Thy will be done" suggests sadly many a broken vow. How can be hope to persuade God that we will follow his will, if he will show it to us, when we have not followed his will when he did show it to us? We might make a humbler vow: O God, help me to go back and pick up some of the promises I have broken!

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Released by Community Press Service.)

FOREST PRODUCTS TAX RETURNS SINK TO A NEW LOW

Forest products tax returns for the fiscal year 1954-55, according to returns posted by the State Department of Taxation, showed a drop of 6 out of 8 categories and resulted in the lowest total collected for a full year since the tax was imposed in 1948. Total tax collected was $104,357.58—a 5 per cent drop of $5,749.26 from last year's report.

Returns from sawmills for lumber they manufactured dropped to $45,-026.45, the lowest ever. It represented a decrease of 12 per cent. Returns for logs was $5,389.23, 7 per cent less; for railroad crossties, $11-583.83, a drop of 33 per cent; for mine props, etc., $426.66, a decline of 38 per cent; for cooperage stock, -1,700.88, 20 per cent less; and for poles and piling, $471.33, which is 34 per cent less.

Only two of the eight classifications showed increases; veneer logs tax returns rose to $1,663.98, an 8 per cent increase; whereas pulpwood and its related items increased to $48,095.22, 5 per cent more than last year. These are the highest returns ever noted for the two products; and, for pulpwood, it is the first year in which returns for it exceed the returns for lumber.

Tax income was reported from all 98 counties as well as from 3 cities, indicating that the forest industry is the most widespread of industries in Virginia. Returns ranged from a low of $1.28 for Elizabeth City to a high of $3,871.97 for Brunswick County. Other leading counties were Sussex, $3,127.64; Buckingham, $2,928.21; Campbell, $2,695.71; Charlotte, $2,672.88; Albemarle, $2,657.40; Southampton, $2,627.70; Bedford, $2,545.31; Amelia, $2,529.14, and Amherst, $2,-520.59.

Further information obtained from the report is that the forest products tax was paid on a total of 1,074,871 cords of pulpwood and excelsior wood, of which 82 per cent was pine; and that the tax was collected from 679,424,000 bd. ft. of products manufactured in the form of lumber, logs, veneer, and crossties—of which 58 per cent was pine. Lesser amounts, not readily computed in terms of cords or board feet, represented mine timbers, poles and piling, and cooperage stock.

This tax, which is collected from approximately 1,300 forest products manufacturers, is a special tax that is assessed on those industries over and above their regular tax load. Funds so collected, less collection charges, are turned over directly to the Virginia Forest Service to augment that agency's progarm of protection, management, and reforestation.

Much Rather

In a certain Western town a beautiful chorus girl sued a rich banker for breach of promise and was awarded ten thousand dollars. Shortly after leaving the court room she was hit by a street car and had eighe broken ribs. The same judge awarded her eight dollars.

Moral—Never play with a woman's heart—kick her in the ribs.

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